

Absalom and Achitophel. A P O E M.

THE KEY.

David, King Charles II. *Absalom*, D. Monmouth. *Annabel*, Dutchess of Monmouth. *Achitophel*, Earl of Shaftsbury. *Zimri*, L. Gray. *Balaam*, Sidney. *Caleb*, Armstrong. *Nadab*, Ferguson. *Shimei*, Sheriff Bethel. *Corah*, Stephen College. *Bethsheba*, D. Portsmouth, or any other Concubine.

IN Pious Times e'er Priest-Craft did begin,
Before Polygamy was made a Sin;
When Man on many multiply'd his Kind,
E'er One to One was, curiously confin'd:
When Nature prompted, and no Law deny'd
Promiscuous Use of Concubine and Bride;
Then *Israel's* Monarch, after Heavens own Heart,
His vigorous Warmth did, variously, impart
To Wives and Slaves: and, wide as his Command,
Scatter'd his Maker's Image through the Land.
Michal, of Royal Blood, the Crown did wear;
A Soil ingrateful to the Tiller's Care:
Nor so the rest; for several Mothers bore
To God-like *David*, several Sons before.
But since like Slaves his Bed they did ascend,
No true Succession could their Seed attend.
Of all this numerous Progeny was none
So beautiful, so brave as *Absalom*:
Whether, inspir'd by Diviner Lust,
His Father got him with a greater Gust;
Or that his conscious Destiny made way,
By manly Beauty to Imperial Sway.
Early in foreign Fields he won Renown,
With Kings and States ally'd to *Israel's* Crown:
In Peace the thoughts of War he could remove,
And seem'd as he were only born for Love.
Whate'er he did was done with so much Ease,
In him alone, 'twas natural to please:
His Motion's all accompany'd with Grace
And *Paradise* was open'd in his Face.
With secret Joy, indulgent *David* view'd
His youthful Image in his Son renew'd:
To all his Wishes nothing be deny'd;
And made the charming *Annabel* his Bride.
What Faults he had (for who from Faults is free?)
His Fathers could not, or he wou'd not see,
Some warm Excuses, which the Law forbore,
Were constru'd Youth that purg'd by boiling o're:
And *Amnon's* Murther, by a specious Name,
Was call'd a just Revenge for injur'd Fame.
Thus prais'd, and lov'd, the Noble Youth remain'd,
While *David*, undisturb'd, in *Sion* reign'd.
But Life can never be sincerely blest:
Heav'n punishes the Bad, and proves the Best.

The *Jews*, a Headstrong, Moody, Murm'ring Race
As ever try'd th' Extent, and Stretch of Grace;
God's pamper'd People whom, debauch'd with Ease.
No King could Govern, nor no God could please;
(Gods they had try'd of ev'ry Shape and Size,
That God-smiths cou'd produce, or Priests devise:
These *Adam-wits*, too fortunately free,
Began to dream they wanted Liberty:
And when no Rule, no President was found
Of Man, by Laws leis circumscrib'd and bound;
They led their wild Desires to Woods and Caves;
And that all but Savages were Slaves.
They who, when *Saul* was Dead, without a Blow,
Made foolish *Ishbosheth* the Crown forego;
Who banish'd *David* did from *Hebron* bring,
And, with a gen'ral Shout proclaim'd him King.
Those very *Jews*, who at their very best,
Their Humour more than Loyalty exprest,
Now, wonder'd why, so long, they had obey'd
An Idol-Monarch which their Hands had made:
Thought they might ruine him they cou'd create;
Or melt him to that Golden Calf, a State.
But these were random Bolts; no form'd Design,
Nor Int'rest made the Factionous Croud to joyn:
The sober part of *Israhel*, free from Stain,
Well knew the Value of a peaceful Reign:
And, looking with a wise Affright,
Saw Seams of Wounds, dishonest to the Sight:
In Contemplation of whose ugly Scars,
They curst the Memory of Civil Wars.
The Moderate Sort of Men thus qualify'd,
Inclin'd the Ballance to the better Side:
And *David's* Mildness manag'd it so well,
The Bad found no Occasion to rebell,
But, when to Sin, our byast Nature leans,
The careful Devil is still at hand with Means;
And providently Pimps for ill desires
The *Good-Old-Cause* reviv'd, a Plot requires.
Plots, true or false, are necessary Things,
To raise up Common-Wealths, and ruin Kings.
Th' Inhabitants of old *Jerusalem*
Were *Jebusites*: the Town so call'd from them;
And theirs the Native Right——
But when the chosen People grew more strong,

The rightful Cause at last became the wrong :
 And every Loss the Men of *Jebus* bore,
 They still were thought God's Enemies the more.
 Thus worn, and weaken'd. well or ill content,
 Submit they must to *David's* Government :
 Impoverish'd, and depriv'd of all Command,
 Their Taxes doubled as they lost their Land ;
 And, what was harder yet to Flesh and Blood,
 Their Gods disgrac'd, and burnt like common Wood.
 'Tis for the Heathen Priest, God in a Flame ;
 For Priests of all Religion are the same :
 Of whatso'er Descent their Godhead be,
 Stock, Stone, or homely Pedigree,
 In his Defence his Servants are as bold.
 As if he had been born of beaven Gold.
 The *Jewish* Rabbins though their Enemies,
 In this conclude them honest Men and wise :
 For 'twas their Duty, all the Learned think,
 To espouse his Cause by whom they eat and drink.
 From hence began that Plot, the Nations Curse,
 Bad in its self, but represented worse.
 Rais'd in Extremes, and in Extremes decry'd :
 With Oaths affirm'd, with dying Vows deny'd.
 Not weigh'd, or winnow'd by the Multitude ;
 But swallow'd in the Mass, unchew'd and crude.
 Some Truth there was, but dastard and brew'd with Lies ;
 To please the Fools and puzzle all the Wise.
 Succeeding Times did equal Folly call,
 Believing Nothing, or believing all.
 The *Canaan* Rites the *Jebusites* embrac'd ;
 Where Gods were reckon'd, and *Idols* rais'd.
 Such sav'ry Deities must needs be good,
 As serv'd at once for Worship and for Food.
 By force they could not introduce these Gods ;
 For Ten to One, in former Days was Odds.
 So Fraud was us'd, (the Sacrificers Trade,)
 Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade.
 Their busie Teachers mingled with the *Jews* ;
 And rak'd, for Converts, even the Court and Stews :
 Which *Hebrew* Priests the more unkindly took,
 Because the Fleece accompanies the Flock.
 Some thought they God's anointed went to slay
 By Guns, invented since full many a Day :
 Our Author swears it not ; but who can know
 How far the *Jebusites* and Devil may go ?
 This Plot, which fail'd for want of Common Sense,
 Had yet a deep and dangerous Consequence :
 For, as when raging Feavers boil the Blood,
 The standing Lake soon floats into a Flood ;
 And ev'ry hostile Humour, which before
 Slept quiet in its Channels, bubbles o're :
 So, sev'ral Factions from the first Ferment,
 Work up to Foam, and threat the Government. [wise,
 Some by their Friends, more by themselves thought
 Oppos'd the Pow'r, to which they could not rise.
 Some had in Courts been great, and thrown from
 Like Friends, were harden'd in Impenitence. (thence,
 Some, by their Monarchs fatal Mercy grown,
 From pardon'd Rebels, Kinmen to the Throne,
 Were rais'd in Pow'r and publick Office high ;
 Strong Bands, if Bands ungrateful Men could rye,
 Of these the false *Achizophel* was first :

A Name to all succeeding Ages curst.
 For close Designs, and crooked Counsels fit ;
 Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of Wit ;
 Restless, unfixt in Principles and Place ;
 In Pow'r unpleas'd, impatient of Disgrace.
 A fiery Soul, which working out its way,
 Fretted the Pigmy Body to decay :
 And o're inform'd the Tenement of Clay.
 A daring Pilot in Extremity ;
 Pleas'd with the Danger, when the Waves went high
 He sought the Storms ; but for a Calm unfit,
 Would steer too nigh the Sands, to boast his Wit.
 Great Wits are sure to Madnes near ally'd ;
 And thin Partitions do their Bounds divide :
 Else, why should he, with Wealth and Honour blest
 Refuse his Age the needful Hours of Rest ?
 Punish a Baby which he could not please ;
 Bankrupt of Life, yet prodigal of Eate ?
 And all to leave what with his Toil he won,
 To that unfeather'd, two-legg'd thing, a Son :
 Got, while his soul did huddled Notions try ;
 And born a shapeless Lump, like Anarchy.
 In Friendship false, implacable in Hate :
 Resolv'd to ruin or to rule the State..
 To compass this, the Triple Bond he broke ;
 The Pillars of the publick Safety shook :
 And fitted *Israel* for a Foreign Yoke.
 Then seiz'd with Fear, yet still affecting Fame,
 Usur'd a Patriot's all-atoning Name.
 So easie still it proves in Faction's Times,
 With publick Zeal to cancel private Crimes :
 How safe is *Idolatry*, and how sacred Ill,
 Where none can Sin against the People's Will :
 Where Crouds can wink ; and no Offence be known
 Since in another's Guilt they find their own.
 Yet, Fame deserv'd, no Enemy can grudge :
 The Statesmen we abhor, but praise the Judge.
 In *Israel's* Courts ne'er sat an *Abbethdin*
 With more discerning Eyes, or Hands more clean :
 Unbrib'd, unsought, the wretched to redress :
 Swift of Dispatch, and easie of Access.
 Oh, had he been content to serve the Crown,
 With Virtues only proper to the Gown ;
 Or, had the Rankness of the Soil been freed
 From Cockle, that oppress'd the Noble Seed :
David for him his tuneful Harp had strung,
 And Heav'n had wanted one Immortal Song.
 But wild Ambition loves to slide, not stand ;
 And Fortune's Ice prefer to Virtue's Land :
Achizophel, grown weary to possess
 A lawful Fame, and lazy Happiness ;
 Disdain'd the Golden Fruit to gather free,
 And lent the Croud his Arm to shake the Tree.
 Now, manifest of Crimes, contriv'd long since,
 He stood at bold Defiance with his Prince :
 Held up the Buckler of the Peoples Cause,
 Against the Crown ; and sculk'd behind the Laws.
 The wight Occasion of the Plot he takes ;
 Some Circumstances finds, but more he makes.
 By buzzing Emissaries fil's the Ears
 Of sitting Crouds, with Jealousies and Fears
 Of Arbitrary Counsels brought to light,

And



And proves the King himself a *Jehusite*.
 Weak Arguments! which yet he knew full well,
 Were strong with People easie to rebel.
 For govern'd by the *Moon*, the giddy *Jews*
 Tread the same Track when she the Prime renews:
 And once in Twenty Years, their Scribes record,
 By natural Instinct they change their Lord.
Achitophel still wants a Chief, and none
 Was found so fit as Warlike *Abfalon*:
 Not, that he wisht his Greatness to create,
 (For Politicians neither love nor hate:)
 But, for he knew, his Title not allow'd,
 Wou'd keep him still depending on the Croud:
 That kingly Pow'r, thus cbbing out, might be
 Drawn to the Dregs of a Democracy.
 Him he attempts, with studied Arts to please,
 And sheds his Venem in such Words as these.
 Auspicious Prince! at whole Nativity
 Some Royal Planet rul'd the Southern Sky;
 Thy longing Country's Darling and Desire;
 Their cloudy Pillar, and their Guardian Fire:
 Their second *Moses*, whose extended Wand
 Divides the Seas, and shews the promis'd Land:
 Whole dawning Day, in every distant Age,
 Has exercis'd the Sacred Prophets Rage:
 The Peoples Pray'r, the glad Diviners Theam,
 The Young Mens Vision, and the Old Mens Dream!
 Thee, Saviour, Thee, the Nations Vows confess;
 And, never satisfy'd with seeing, blest:
 Swift, unbest, on Pemp's, thy steps proclaim.
 And flaming Bal'es are taught to lip thy Name.
 How long wilt thou the general Joy detain;
 Starve, and defraud the People of thy Reign?
 Content ingloriously to pass thy Days
 Like one of Virtue's Fools that feeds on Praise;
 Till thy fresh Glories, which now shine so bright,
 Grow stale, and tarnish without daily sight.
 Believe me, Royal Youth, thy Fruit must be,
 Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the Tree.
 Heav'n, has to all allotted, soon or late,
 Some lucky Revolution of their Fate:
 Whose Motions, if we watch and guide with Skill,
 (For human Good depends on human Will.)
 Our Fortune rolls, as from a smooth Descent,
 And from the first Impression takes the Bent:
 But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like Wind;
 And leaves repenting Folly far behind.
 Now, now she meets you, with a glorious Prize,
 And spreads her Locks before her, as she flies.
 Had thus old *David*, from whose Loyns you spring,
 Not dar'd, when Fortune call'd him to be King,
 At *Gath* an Exile he might still remain;
 And Heavens anointing Oyl had been in vain.
 Let his successful Youth your Hopes engage;
 But shun th' Example of declining Age:
 Behold him setting in his Western Skies,
 The Shadows lengthning as the Vapours rise.
 He is not now, as when on *Jordan's* Sand
 The joyful People throng'd to see him Land,
 Cov'ring the *Beach*, and blackning all the *Strand*:
 But, like the Prince of Angel from his height,
 Comes tumbling downward with diminish'd Light:

Betray'd by one poor Plot to publick Scorn;
 (Our only Blessing since his curst Return:)
 Those Heaps of People which one Sheaf did bind,
 Blown off, and scatter'd by a Puff of Wind,
 What Strength can he to your Designs oppose,
 Naked of Friends, and round beset with Foes?
 If *Pharaoh's* doubtful Succour he shou'd use,
 A Foreign Aid wou'd more incense the *Jews*:
 Proud *Egypt* wou'd dissembled Friendship bring;
 Foment the War, but not Support the King:
 Nor wou'd the Royal Party e're Unite
 With *Pharaoh's* Arms, t' assist the *Jehusite*;
 Or if they shou'd, their Interest soon wou'd break,
 And, with such odious Aid, make *David* weak.
 All sorts of Men, by my successful Arts,
 Abhorring Kings, estrange their alter'd Hearts
 From *David's* Rule: and 'tis the gen'ral Cry,
 Religion, Common-wealth, and Liberty.
 If you, as Champion of the Publick Good,
 Add to their Arms a Chief of Royal Blood;
 What may not *Israel* hope, and what Applause
 Might such a General gain by such a Cause?
 Nor barren Praise alone, that gawdy Flow'r,
 Fair only to the Sight, but solid Pow'r:
 And nobler in limited Command,
 Given by the Love of all your Native Land,
 Then a Successive Title, long, and dark,
 Drawn from the mouldy Rolls of *Noah's* Ark.
 What cannot Praise effect in mighty Minds,
 When Flattery sooths, and when Ambition blinds!
 Desire of Pow'r, on Earth a vicious Weed,
 Yet, sprung from high, is of Celestial Seed:
 In God 'tis Glory: and when Men aspire,
 'Tis but a Spark too much of heavenly Fire.
 Th' ambitious Youth, too covetous of Fame,
 Too full of Angels Metal in his Frame;
 Unwarily was led from Virtue's Ways;
 Made drunk with Honour, and debauch'd with Praise.
 Half loath, and half consenting to the Ill,
 (For loyal Bleed within him struggled still)
 He thus reply'd.—And what Pretence have I
 To take up Arms for publick Liberty?
 My Father governs with unquestion'd Right;
 The Faith's Defender, and Mankind's Delight:
 Good, Gracious Just, observant of the Laws;
 And Heav'n by Wonders has espous'd his Cause.
 Whom has he wrong'd in all his peaceful Reign?
 Who sues for Justice, to his Throne in vain?
 What Millions has he pardon'd of his Foes,
 Whom Just Revenge did to his Wrath expose?
 Mild, Easie, Humble, Studious of our Good;
 Inclind to Mercy, and averse from Blood.
 If Mildness ill with stubborn *Israel* Suit,
 His Crime is God's beloved Attribute.
 What cou'd he gain, his People to Betray
 Or change his Right for Arbitrary Sway?
 Let haughty *Pharaoh* curse with such a Reign,
 His fruitful *Nile*, and yolk a servile Train.
 Why then should I, encouraging the Bad,
 Turn Rebel, and run popularly Mad?
 What more can I expect, while *David* lives?
 All but his Kingly Diadem he gives:

And that; but there he paus'd; then sighing, said,
Is surely destin'd for another Head.

I find, I find, my mounting Spirits bold,
And *David's* Part disdains my Mother's Mold.
Why am I scant'd by a Niggard Birth?

My Soul disclaims the Kindred of her Earth:
And made for Empire, whilsters me within:
Desire of Greatness is a God-like Sin.

Him staggering so when Hell's dire Agent found,
While fainting Virtue scarce maintain'd her Ground,
He yours from Forces in, and thus replies;
Th' Eternal God himself is Good and Wise,
Is parts not these prodigious Gifts in vain;
What Wonders are reserv'd to bless your Reign?
Against your Will your Arguments have shown,
Such Virtue's only giv'n to guide a Throne.
Not that your Father's Mildness I condemn;
But many Force becomes a Diadem.

'Tis true, he grants the People all they crave;
And more perhaps than Subjects ought to have:
For Jewish Grants suppose a Monarch tame,
And more his Goodness than his Wit proclaim.
But when should People strive their Bonds to break,
If not when Kings are negligent and weak?

Let him give on till he can give no more,
The thirty Shekels shall keep him poor:
And every Shekel which he can receive,
Shall cast a Doubt on his Prerogative.

To ply him with new Plots, shall be my care;
Or plunge him deep in some Expensive War;
Which, when his Treasure can no more supply,
He must, with the remains of Kingship, buy.
His faithful Friends, our Jealousies and Fears,
Call *Jealousies*; and *Princes* Penioners:
When, when our Fury from his Aid has torn,
He shall be naked left to publick Scorn.

The next Successor, whom I fear and hate,
My Arts have made obnoxious to the State;
Turn'd all his Vertues to his Overthrow,
And gain'd our Elders to pronounce a Doe.
His Right for Sums of necessary Gold,
Shall first be Pawn'd, and afterwards be Sold:
Till Time shall ever wanting *David* draw:
To pass your doubtful Title into Law:

If not, the People have a Right supream
To make their Kings; for Kings are made for them,
All Empire is no more than Pow'r in Trust,
Which when resum'd, can be no longer just.
Succession, for the General Good design'd,
In his own Wrong a Nation cannot bind:
If a'ring that, the People can relieve,
Better one suffer, than a Nation grieve.

The Jews well knew their Pow'r; for *Saul* they chose,
God was their King, and God they durst Depose.
Urge now your Piety, your filial Name,
A Father's Right, and fear of future Fame;
The publick Good, that universal Call,
To which even Heav'n submitted, answers all.
Nor let his Love enchant your generous Mind;
'Tis Nature's Trick to propagate her Kind.
Our fond begetters, who wou'd never die,
Love but themselves in their Posterity.

Or let his Kindness by th' Effects be try'd,
Or let him lay his vain Pretence aside.

God said, He lov'd your Father; cou'd he bring
A better Proof, than to anoint him King?
It surely shew'd he lov'd the Shepherd well,
Who gave so fair a Flock as *Israel*.

Wou'd *David* have you thought his Darling Son?
What means he then to alienate the Crown?
The Name of godly he may blush to bear;
'Tis after God's own Heart to cheat his Heir,

He to his Brother gives supream Command;
To you a Legacy of Barren Land:
Perhaps th' old Harp, on which he thrums his Lays
Or some dull *Hebrew* Ballad in your Praise.

Then the next Heir, a Prince severe and wise,
Already looks on you with jealous Eyes;
Sees thro' the thin Disguises of your Arts.

And marks your Progress in the Peoples Hearts.
Tho' now his mighty Soul its Grief contains;
He meditates Revenge who least complains.
And like a Lion slumbring in the Way.

On Sleep dissembling, while he waits his Prey,
His fearless Foes within his Distance draws;
Constrains his roaring, and contracts his Paws:
Till at the last, his Time for Fury found,
He shoots with sudden Vengeance from the Ground:
The prostrate Vulgar, passes o're, and spares;
But with a lordly Rage his Hunters tears.

Your Case no tame Expedients will afford;
Resolve on Death, or Conquest by the Sword,
Which for no less a Stake, than Life you draw;
And Self-Defence is Nature's eldest Law,
Leave the warin People no consid'ring Time;
For then Rebellion may be thought a Crime.

Prevail your self of what Occasion gives,
But try your Title while your Father lives:
And that your Arms may have a fair Pretence,
Proclaim, you take them in the King's Defence:
Whose sacred Life each Minute wou'd expose.
To Plots, from seeming Friends, and secret Foes.
And who can sound the Depth of *David's* Soul?
Perhaps his Fear, his Kindness may controul.
He fears his Brother, tho' he loves his Son,
For plighted Vows too late to be undone.

If so, by Force he wishes to be gain'd;
Like Womens Leachery, to seem constrain'd:
Doubt not; but when he most affects the Frown,
Commit a pleasing Rape upon the Crown.
Secure his Person, to secure your Cause;
They who possess the Prince, possess the Laws.

He said, And this Advice above the rest,
With *Ambition's* mild Nature suited best:
Unblam'd of Life, (*Ambition* set aside,)
Not stain'd with Cruelty, nor puffed with Pride.
How happy had he been, if Destiny
Had higher plac'd his Birth, or not so high!
His Kingly Vertues might have claim'd a Throne;
And blest all other Countries but his own:
But charming Greatness, since so few refuse;
'Tis juster to lament him, than accuse.

Strong were his Hopes a Rival to remove,
With Blandishments to gain the publick Love;

To head the Faction while their Zeal was hot,
 And popularly prosecute the Plot.
 To further this, *Achitophel* unites
 The *Malecontents* of all the *Israelites*;
 Whose differing Parties he cou'd likewise joyn,
 For several Ends, to serve the same Design.
 The best, and of the Princes some were such,
 Who thought the Pow'r of Monarchy too much:
 Mistaken Men, and Patriots in their Hearts:
 Not Wicked, but seduc'd by Impious Arts.
 By these the Springs of Property were bent
 And wound so high, they crackt the Government,
 The next for Int'rest sought t' embroil the State,
 To sell their Duty at a dearer Rate;
 And make their *Jewish* Markets of the Throne.
 Pretending publick Good, to serve their own.
 Others thought Kings an useless heavy load,
 Who cost too much, and did too little Good.
 These were for laying honest *David* by,
 On Principles of pure good Husbandry.
 With them joyn'd all th' Harangues of the Throng,
 That thought to get Preferment by the Tongue.
 Who follow next, a double Danger bring,
 Not on'y hating *David*, but the King;
 The *Solymean* Rout, well vers'd of old,
 In godly Faction, and in Treason bold;
 Cowering and quaking at a Conqueror's Sword,
 But lofty to a lawful Prince restor'd;
 Saw with Disdain an *Ethnick* Plot begun,
 And scorn'd by *Jebusites* to be out-done.
 Hot-headed *Levites* too, who pul'd before
 From th' *Ark*, which in the *Judges* Days they bore;
 Refus'd their Cant, and with zealous Cry,
 Pursu'd their old belov'd *Theocracy*:
 Where *Sanhedrim* and Priest enslav'd the Nation,
 And justify'd their Spoils by Inspiration.
 For who so fit for Reign as *Atren's* Race
 If once Dominion they cou'd find in Grace?
 These led the Pack; tho' not of surest Scent,
 Yet deepest mouth'd against the Government.
 A numerous Host of dreaming Saints succeed;
 Of the true old Enthusiastick Breed:
 'Gainst Form and Order they their Pow'r employ;
 Nothing to build, and all Things to destroy.
 But far more num'rous was the Herd of such,
 Who think too little, and who talk too much.
 These out of meer Instinct, they knew not why,
 Ador'd their Father's God, and Property:
 And, by the same blind Benefit of Fate,
 The Devil and the *Jebusite* did hate:
 Born to be sav'd, ev'n in their own Despight;
 Because they cou'd not help believing right.
 Such were the Tools; but a whole *Horda* more
 Remains, of sprouting Heads too long, to score.
 Some of their Chiefs were Princes of the Land;
 In the first Rank of these did *Zimri* stand,
 A Man so various, that he seem'd to be
 Not one, but all Mankind's Epitomy.
 Stiff in Opinions, always in the Wrong;
 Was ev'ry thing by Starts, and nothing long;
 But in the Course of one revolving Moon,
 Was Chymist, Fidler, Statel-man, and Buffoon:

Then all for Women, Painting, Rhiming, Drinking;
 Besides ten thousand Freaks that dy'd in thinking.
 Blest Madmen, who cou'd ev'ry Hour employ.
 With something new to wish, or to enjoy?
 Railing and Praising were his usual Theams;
 And both (to shew their Judgment) in Extreame:
 So over violent, or over civil,
 That every Man with him, was God or Devil.
 In squandering Wealth was his peculiar Art;
 Nothing went unrewarded but Desert.
 Beggar'd by Fools, whom still he found too late:
 He had his Jest, and they had his Estate.
 He laugh'd himself from Court; then sought Relief
 By forming Parties, but cou'd ne'er be Chief:
 For spite of him, the Weight of Business fell
 On *Absalom* and wise *Achitophel*:
 Thus, wicked but in Wills, of Means bereft,
 He left not Faction, but of that was left.

Titles and Names 'twere tedious to rehearse
 Of Lords, below the Dignity of Verse.
 Wits, Warriors, Common-wealths Men, were the best:
 Kind Husbands, and meer Nobles all the rest.
 And therefore in the Name of Du'ness, be
 The well-hung *Balaam* and cold *Caleb* free.
 And canting *Nadab* let Oblivion damn,
 Who made new Porridge for the Paschal Lamb.
 Let Friendship's Holy Band some Names assure:
 Some their own Worth, and some let Scorn secure.
 Nor shall the Rascal Rabble here have Place,
 Whom Kings no Titles gave, nor God no Grace:
 Not Bull-fac'd *Jonas*, who cou'd Statutes draw
 To wean Rebellion, and make Treason Law.
 But he, tho' bad, is follow'd by a worse,
 The Wretch, who Heav'n's Anointed dar'd to curse.
Shimei, whose Youth did early Promise bring
 Of Zeal to God, and Hatred to his King;
 Did wisely from expensive Sins refrain,
 And never broke the Sabbath, but for Gain.
 Nor never was he known an Oath to vent,
 Or Curse, unless against the Government,
 Thus heaping Wealth by the most ready Way
 Among the *Jews*, which was to cheat and pray.
 The City to reward his pious Hate
 Against his Master, chose him Magistrate:
 His Hand a Vane of Justice did uphold,
 His Neck was loaded with a Chain of Gold,
 During his Office, Treason was no Crime,
 The Sons of *Behai* had a glorious Time:
 For *Shimei*, tho' prodigal of Pelf,
 Yet lov'd his wicked Neighbour as himself:
 When two or three were gathered to declaim
 Against the Monarch of *Jerusalem*,
Shimei was always in the midst of them.
 And if they curs'd the King when he was by,
 Wou'd rather Curse than break good Company.
 If any durst his Faction's Friends accuse,
 He packt a Jury of Dissenting *Jews*.
 Whose fellow-feeling in the godly Cause,
 Wou'd free the sutt'ring Saint from Human Laws.
 For Laws are only made to punish those
 Who serve the King, and to protect his Foes.
 If any leisure Time he had from Pow'r,

(Because

(Because 'tis Sin to mis-employ an Hour ;)
 His Bus'ness was, by Writing, to persuade,
 That Kings were Useless, and a Clog to Trade :
 And, that his noble Stile he might refine,
 No *Rehabite* more shunn'd the Fumes of Wine.
 Chait were his Cellars ; and his Shrieval Board
 The Grossness of a City Feast abhorr'd :
 His Cooks with long Disuse, their Trade forgot,
 Cool was his Kitchen, tho' his Brains were hot.
 Such frugal Virtue, Malice may accuse ;
 But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews :
 For Towns once burnt, such Magistrates require
 As dare not tempt God's Providence by Fire.
 With spiritual Food he fed his Servants well,
 But free from Fleth, that made the Jews rebel :
 And Moses's Laws he held in more account,
 For forty Days of Fasting in the Mount.
 To speak the rest, who better are forgot,
 Would tire a well-breath'd Witness of the Plot :
 Yet, *Corah*, thou shalt from Oblivion pass ;
 Erect thy self thou Monumental Brass :
 High as the Serpent of thy Metal made,
 While Nations stand secure beneath thy Shade.
 What tho' his Birth were base, yet Comets rise
 From earth'y Vapours ere they shine in Skies.
 Prodigious Actions may as well be done
 By Weaver's Issue as by Prince's Son.
 This Arch-Attestor for the Publick Good,
 By that one Deed Embles all his Blood.
 Who ever asks the Witness's high Race,
 Wilt Oath with Martyrdom and Stephen grace ?
 Ours was a Levite, and as Times went then
 His Tribe were God Almighty's Gentlemen.
 Stark were his Eyes, his Voice were harsh and loud,
 Sure Signs he neither Coolerick was, nor proud :
 His long Corn precd his Wit ; his Saint-like Grace
 A Church Vermilion, and a Moses's Face,
 His Memory, miraculously great,
 Could Plots, exceeding Mins Belief, repeat ;
 Which, therefore cannot be accounted Lies,
 For human Wit could never such devise.
 Some future Truths are ming'd in his Book ;
 But, where the Witness fail'd, the Prophet spoke :
 Some Things like visionary Slights appear ;
 The Spirit caught him up, the Lords knows where :
 And gave his Rabbinical Degree,
 Unknown to foreign University.
 His Judgment yet his Memory did excell ;
 Which precd his woman's Evidence so well ;
 And suited to the Temper of the Times ;
 Then graining under Jebusitick Crimes.
 Let Israel's Eyes suspect his Heavenly Call,
 And rashly judge his Wit Apocryphal ;
 Our Laws for such Affairs have Forfeits made ;
 He takes his Life, who takes away his Trade.
 Were I my self in Witness Corah's Place,
 The Wretch who did me such a dire Disgrace,
 Should blot my Memory, tho' once forgot,
 To make him an Appendix of my Plot.
 His Zeal in Heaven, made him his Prince's Judge,
 And laid his Person with Indignities :
 But Zeal peculiar Privilege affords ;

Indulging Latitude to Deeds and Words.
And Corah might for Agag's Murder Call
In Terms as coarse as Samuel us'd to Saul.
What others in his Evidence did joyn,
(The best that cou'd be had for Love or Coyn,)
In Corah's own Predicament will fall ;
For Witness is a common Name to all.

Surrounded thus with Friends of ev'ry Sort,
 Deluded Absalom forsakes the Court :
 Impatient of high Hopes, urg'd with Renown,
 And fir'd with near Possession of a Crown ;
 Th' admiring Croud are dazzled with surprize,
 And on his goodly Person feed their Eyes :
 His joy conceal'd, he sets himself to show ;
 On each side bowing popularly low.
 His Looks, his Gestures, and his Words he frames,
 And with familiar Ease repeats their Names ;
 Thus form'd by Nature, furnish'd out with Arts,
 He glides unselt into their secret Hearts.
 Then, with a kind compassionating Look,
 And sighs, bespeaking Pity ere he spoke :
 Few Words he said ; but easie those and fit :
 More slow than Hybla drops, and far more sweet.

I motion, my Country-men, your last Estate ;
 Tho' far unable to prevent your Fate :
 Behold a banisht Man, for your dear Cause
 Expos'd a Prey to arbitrary Laws !
 Yet ah ! that I alone cou'd be undone,
 Cut off from Empire, and no more a Son !
 Now all your Liberties a Spoil are made ;
 Egypt and Tyrus intercept your Trade,
 And Jebusites your sacred Rites invade.
 My Father, whom with Reverence yet I name,
 Chann'd into Ease, is careless of his Fame ;
 And brib'd with petty Sums of Foreign Gold,
 Is grown in Bethsheba's Embraces old ;
 Exalts his Enemies, his Friends destroys :
 And all his Pow'r against himself employs.
 He gives, and let him give my Right away :
 But why should he be his own, and yours betray ?
 He, only he can make the Nation bleed,
 And he alone from my Revenge is freed,
 Take then my Tears, (with that he wip'd his Eyes)
 'Tis all the Aid my present Pow'r supplies :
 No Court-Informer can these Arms accuse ;
 These Arms may Sons against their Fathers use ;
 And, 'tis my Wish, the next Successor's Reign
 May make no other Israelite complain.

Youth, Beauty, Graceful Action, seldom fail ;
 But common Int'rest always will prevail ;
 And Duty never ceases to be shown
 To him, who makes the Peoples Wrongs his own.
 The Croud, (that still believe their Kings oppress)
 With lifted Hands their young Messiah bless :
 Who now begins his Progress to ordain,
 With Chariots, Horsemen, and a num'rous Train :
 From East to West his Glories he displays ;
 And, like the Sun, the Promis'd Land surveys.
 Fame runs before him, as the Morning-Star ;
 And Shouts of joy salute him from afar :
 Each House receives him as a Guardian-God ;
 And consecrates the Place of his Abode :

But hospitable Treats did most commend
 Wise Isachar, his wealthy Western Friend.
 This moving Court, that caught the Peoples Eyes,
 And seem'd but Pomp, and other Ends disguise:
 Achitophel had form'd it with intent
 To sound the Depths, and fathom where it went,
 The Peoples Hearts; distinguish Friends from Foes;
 And try their Strength before they came to blows,
 Yet all was colour'd with a smooth pretence
 Of specious Love, and Duty to their Prince,
 Religion and Redress of Grievances,
 Two Names that always cheat and always please;
 Are often urg'd; and good King David's Life
 Endanger'd by a Brother and a Wife.
 Thus, in a Pageant-Shew, a Plot is made,
 And Peace it self is War in Masquerade.
 Oh foolish Israel! never warn'd by Ill:
 Still the same Bait, and circumvented still!
 Did ever Men forsake their present Evil,
 In midst of Health to imagine a Disease;
 Take pains to continue Mischiefs to persevere,
 Make Heirs for Monarchs, and for God decree?
 What shall we think! Can People give away
 Both for themselves and Sons, the native sway?
 Then they are left defenceless, to the Sword
 Of each unbounded arbitrary Lord:
 And Laws are vain by which we Right enjoy,
 If Kings unquestion'd can those Laws destroy.
 Yet, if the Crowd be Judge of Fit and Just,
 And Kings are only Officers in Trust.
 Then this resuming Custom was declar'd
 When Kings are made, or is for ever bar'd;
 If those who gave the Sceptre would not tie
 By their own Deed their own Posterity,
 How then cou'd Adam bind his future Race?
 How cou'd his Forfeit on Mankind take?
 Or how cou'd heavenly Justice damn us all.
 Who ne'er consented to our Father's Fall?
 Then Kings are Slaves to those whom they command,
 And Tenants to their Peoples Pleasure stand.
 Add, that the Pow'r for Property allow'd,
 Is mischievously seated in the Crowd:
 For who can be secure of private Right,
 If Sovereign sway may be dissolv'd by Might?
 Nor is the Peoples Judgment always true:
 The most may err as grossly as the few.
 And faultless Kings run down, by common Cry,
 For Vice, Oppression, and for Tyranny.
 What Standard is there in a fickle Rout,
 Which flowing to the Mark, runs faster out?
 Not only Crouds, but Sanhedrins may be
 Infected with this publick Lunacy:
 And share the Madness of Rebellicus Times,
 To Murder Monarchs for imagin'd Crimes
 If they may give and take when e're they please,
 Not Kings alone (the Godhead's Images)
 But Government it self at length must fall
 To Nature's State, where all have right to all.
 Yet, grant our Lords the People Kings can make,
 What prudent Man a seel'd Throne wou'd shake?
 For whatsoever their Sufferings were before,
 That Change they covet makes them suffer more.

All other Errors but disturb a State;
 But Innovation is the Blow of Fate.
 If antient Fabricks nod, and threat to fall,
 To patch the Flaws, and Buttress up the Wall,
 Thus far 'tis Duty; but here fix the Mark;
 For all beyond it is to touch the Ark.
 To change Foundations, cast the Frame anew,
 Is Work for Rebels, who base Ends pursue:
 At once Divine and Humane Laws controul;
 And mend the Parts by ruine of the whole.
 The tampering World is subject to this Curse,
 To Physick their Disease into a worse.
 Now what Religion can Righteous David bring?
 How bold 'tis to be too good a King!
 Friends he has few, so high the Madness grows;
 Who dare be such, must be the Peoples Foes:
 Yet some there were, ev'n in the worst of Days;
 Some let me Name, and naming is to Praise.
 In this short File Barzillai first appears,
 Barzillai crown'd with Honour and with Years.
 Long since the Rising Rebels he withstood
 In Regions Waste, beyond the Jordan's Flood.
 Unfortunately brave to buoy the State;
 But sinking underneath his Master's Fate:
 In Exile with his God-like Prince he mourn'd;
 For him he suffer'd, and with him return'd.
 The Court he practis'd, not the Courtier's Art:
 Large was his Wealth, but larger was his Heart:
 Which, well the noblest Objects knew to chuse,
 The fighting Warrior, and recording Muse.
 His Bed cou'd once a fruitful Issue boast:
 Now more than half a Father's Name is lost.
 His eldest Hope, with ev'ry Grace adorn'd,
 By me (so Heav'n will have it) always Mourn'd,
 And always honour'd, snatch'd in Manhood's Prime
 By unequal Fates, and Providences Crime:
 Yet not before the Goal of Honour won,
 All Parts fulfill'd of Subject and of Son;
 Swift was the Race, but short the Time to run.
 Oh narrow Circle, but of Pow'r divine,
 Scanted in Space, but perfect in thy Line!
 By Sea, by Land, thy matchless Worth was known;
 Arms thy Delight, and War was all thy own:
 Thy Force, infus'd, the fainting Tyrians prop'd:
 And haughty Pharaoh found his Fortune stop'd.
 Oh antient Honour, oh unconquer'd hand,
 Whom Foes unpunish'd never cou'd withstand!
 But Israel was unworthy of thy Name:
 Short is the Date of all immoderate Fame,
 It looks as Heav'n our Ruine had design'd,
 And durst not trust thy Fortune and thy Mind.
 Fow, free from Earth, thy disencumber'd Soul
 Mounts up, and leaves behind the Clouds and starry Pole:
 From thence thy Kindred Legions may it thou bring,
 To aid the Guardian Angel of thy King.
 Here stop my Muse, here cease thy painful Flight;
 No Pinions can pursue immortal Height:
 Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,
 And tell thy Soul she shou'd have fled before;
 Or fled she with his Life, and left this Verse
 To hang on her departed Patron's Herse?
 Now take thy sleepy Flight from Heav'n, and see:
 If thou canst find on Earth another He;
 Another He wou'd be too hard to find,
 See then whom thou canst see not far behind.
 Zadoc the Priest, whom, shunning Pow'r and Place,
 His lowly Mind advanc'd to David's Grace;
 With him the Sagan of Jerusalem,
 Of Hospitable Soul, and Noble Stem;
 Him of the Western Dome, whose weighty Sense
 Flows in fit Words and heavenly Eloquence.
 The Prophets Sons by such Examples led,
 To Learning and to Loyalty were bred:
 For Colleges on bounteous Kings depend,
 And never Rebel was to Arts a Friend.

To these succeed the Pillars of the Laws,
 Who best cou'd plead, and best can judge a Cause.
 Next them a Train of Loyal Peers ascend:
 Sharp judging Adriel, the Muses Friend,
 Himself a Muse: — In Sanhedrins debate
 True to his Prince; but not a Slave of State.
 Whom David's Love with Honours did adorn,
 That from his disobedient Son were torn.
 Jothen of piercing Wit and pregnant Thought:
 Endow'd by Learning, and by Nature taught
 To move Assemblies, who but only try'd
 The worse a-while, then chose the better side;
 Nor chosen alone, but turn'd the Balance too:
 So much the Weight of one brave Man can do.
 Hushai the Friend of David in Distress,
 In publick Storms of manly Steadfastness:
 By foreign Treaties he inform'd his Youth;
 And join'd Experience to his Native Truth.
 His frugal Care supply'd the wanting Throne;
 Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own:
 'Tis ealie Conduct when Exchequers flow,
 But hard the Task to manage well the low:
 For Sovereign Pow'r is too deprest or high,
 When Kings are forc'd to sell, or Crowds to buy.
 Indulge one Labour more, my weary Muse,
 For Amiel; who can Amiel's Praise refuse?
 Of ancient Race by Birth, but nobler yet
 In his own Worth, and without Title great:
 The Sanhedrim long time as Chief he rul'd,
 Their Reason guided, and their Passion cool'd,
 So dextrous was he in the Crowd's Defence,
 So form'd to speak a Loyal Nation's Sense,
 That as their Band was Israel's Tribes in small,
 So fit was he to represent them all.
 Now rather Chariteeis the Seat ascend,
 Whose loose Carriers his steady Skill commend:
 They, like the unequal Ruler of the Day,
 Misguide the Seasons and mistake the Way:
 While he withdrawn, at their mad Labour smiles,
 And safe enjoys the Sabbath of his Toils.
 These were the chief; a small but faithful Band
 Of Worthies, in the Breach who dares to stand,
 And tempt th' united Fury of the Land?
 With Grief they view'd such powerful Engines bent,
 To batter down the lawful Government.
 A numerous Faction with pretended Frights,
 In Sanhedrins to plume the regal Rights.
 The true Successor from the Court remov'd:
 The Plot, by hiring Witnesses improv'd.
 These Ills they saw, and as their Duty bound,
 They shew'd the King the Danger of the Wound:
 That no Concessions from the Throne wou'd please;
 But Leuitives fomented the Disease:
 That Absalom ambitious of the Crown,
 Was made the Love to draw the People down:
 That false Achitophel's pernicious Hate,
 Had turn'd the Plot to ruin Church and State:
 That Council violent, the Rabble worse;
 That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse.
 With all these Loads of Injuries oppress'd,
 And long revolving in his careful Breast,
 Th' Event of Things: at last, his Patience tir'd,
 Thus from his Royal Throne, by Heav'n inspir'd,
 The God-like David spoke; with awful Fear
 His Train their Maker in their Master hear.
 Thus long have I by native Mercy sway'd,
 My Wrongs dissembled, my Revenge delay'd:
 So willing to forgive th' offending Age;
 So much the Father did the King allwage.
 But now so far my Clemency they slight,
 Th' Offender's question my forgiving Right.
 That one was made for many, they contend:
 But 'tis to rule, for that's a Monarch's End.
 They call my Tenderness of Blood, my Fear;
 Tho' Manly Tempers can the longest bear,
 Yet, since they will divert my native Course,

'Tis time to shew I am not good by Force:
 These heap'd Affronts that haughty Subjects bring,
 Are Burthens for a Camel, not a King:
 Kings are the publick Pillars of the State,
 Born to sustain and prop the Nation's Weight:
 If any Young Sampson will pretend a Call
 To shake the Column, let him share the Fall:
 But, Oh, that yet he wou'd repent and live!
 How ealie 'tis for Parent to forgive.
 With how few Tears a Pardon might be won
 From Nature, pleading for a Darling Son!
 Poor pitied Youth, by my paternal Care,
 Rais'd up to all the Height his Frame cou'd bear:
 Had God ordain'd his Fate for Empire born,
 He wou'd have giv'n his Soul another Turn:
 Gull'd with a Patriot's Name, whose modern Sense
 Is one that wou'd by Law supplant his Prince:
 The Peoples Brave, the Politicians Tool;
 Never was Patriot yet, but was a Fool.
 Whence comes it that Religion and the Laws
 Shou'd more be Absalom's than David's Cause?
 His old Instructor, e'er he lost his Place,
 Was never thought indu'd with so much Grace.
 Good Heav'n's, how Faction can a Patriot Paint!
 My Rebel ever proves my Peoples Saint:
 Wou'd they impose an Heir upon the Throne?
 Let Sanhedrins be taught to give their own.
 A King's at least a part of Government;
 And mine as requisite as their Consent:
 Without my leave a future King to choose,
 Infers a Right the present to depose,
 True, they petition me to approve their Choice,
 But Esau's Hands suit ill with Jacob's Voice.
 My pious Subjects for my safety pray,
 Which to secure they take my Pow'r away.
 From Plots and Treasons Heav'n preserve my Years,
 But save me most from my Petitioners.
 Unfate as the barren Womb of Graven,
 God cannot grant so much as they can crave.
 What then is left but with a jealous Eye
 To guard the small Remains of Loyalty?
 The Law shall still direct my peaceful Sway,
 And the same Law reach Rebels to obey:
 No groundless Clamours shall my Friends remove,
 Nor Crowds have Pow'r to punish ere they prove:
 For Gods, and God-like Kings their Care express,
 Still to defend their Servants in Distress.
 Oh that my Pow'r to saving were confin'd:
 Why am I forc'd, like Heav'n against my Mind,
 To make Examples of another Kind?
 Must I at length the Sword of Justice draw?
 Oh curst Effects of necessary Law!
 How ill my Fear they by my Mercy scan,
 Beware the Fury of a patient Man.
 Law they require, let Law then shew her Face;
 They cou'd not be content to look on Grace,
 Her hinder Parts, but with a daring Eye
 To tempt the Terror of her Front, and Die.
 Their Belial with their Belzebub will fight;
 Thus on my Foes, my Foes shall do me right:
 Nor doubtth Event, for factious Crowds engage
 In their first Onset, all their brutal Rage;
 Then, let me take an unrelucted Course:
 Retire and travise, and delude their Force:
 But when they stand all Breathless, urge the Fight,
 And rise upon 'em with redoubled Might:
 For lawful Pow'r is still superiour found,
 When long driv'n back, at length it stands the Ground.
 He said. Th' Almighty, nodding, gave Consent;
 And Peals of Thunder shook the Firmament.
 Henceforth a Series of new Time began,
 The mighty Years in long Procession ran:
 Once more the God-like David was restor'd,
 And willing Nations knew their lawful Lord.